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DENMARK

Large Church Work Centre Planned in Copenhagen.

Kirkens Korshær, the Danish Lutheran National Church's social welfare organization, is planning the establishment of a large work centre in Copenhagen at Nikolai Church, where the Danish reformer Hans Tausen once preached his message in the capital.

The church was destroyed in the fire of 1795, but was rebuilt in 1915-17 at the instigation of a private citizen and handed over to the municipality of Copenhagen. Even at that time the church was not needed as a parish church in central Copenhagen, but the deed of gift stipulates that the church should be used for occasional services, whereas the many surrounding rooms could be used for a number of other purposes indicated in the deed. Until now most of the buildings have been used for a municipal library, but as this is to move to a new location in the near future, the Kirkens Korshær has asked for permission to rent the rooms for a church welfare centre.

The inspiring thing about the plan is that the old church with its altar and pulpit is to form the heart of the church welfare centre. Around it will be situated the main office of Kirkens Korshær, meeting rooms, heated rooms in winter for the poor, the canteen, the conference room, sewing and hobby rooms; and the work centre will be open night and day for people who need a helping hand.

The plan is warmly recommended in many quarters, and as

it is along the same lines as those specified in the deed of gift it is thought that the municipality of Copenhagen will approve it.

At the same time the Kirkens Korshær is planning the erection of a large new hostel for the homeless in Copenhagen which is to replace several old and outdated hostels.

New Mission Field Opened in East Pakistan.

Representatives of the Danish, Norwegian, and American Mission to the Santals have resolved at a meeting in Copenhagen to start work on a mission field in East Pakistan. In the course of the coming year 4 - 5 missionaries are to be sent out to the new district from the three mission societies in co-operation, the financial responsibility being equally distributed among them. The missionaries are to constitute themselves as a mission conference directing the work in concert with the home boards, and from January 1st, 1961, it will be the mission council in East Pakistan that will nominate missionary candidates upon recommendation of the home boards.

The new initiative is a continuation of the co-operation that has existed in late years between Danish, Norwegian, and American missions to the Santals.

Heading Towards a Totalitarian State?

The debate on women pastors which flared up again in Denmark on account of the appointment of Miss Helga Jensen as assistant pastor in Skive (CN No. 12 and 14) has i.a. evoked an article by Professor Regin Prenter in the magazine "Frihed og fælleskab" (Freedom and Fellowship), in which he seeks to draw the question into the wider context of the relation between the State and the Lutheran National Church.

Various articles in the press have reproached the bishop of Viborg diocese, the Rt. Rev. Christian Baun, for his refusal to ordain Miss Helga Jensen in spite of the fact that present legislation gives women the right to become pastors, and in this connection such strong expressions as "un-Christian", "inhuman", and "meaningless" were used. In answer Professor Prenter points out that Parliament, while passing legislation in church affairs, cannot decide internal church matters and cannot compel man's conscience.

Closing his article the Professor writes:

"Great things will happen in the Danish people's democracy as well as in the National Church if the attitude, which is currently being voiced in the press and in public discussion, really should become the dominant one: viz. that it is right and reasonable that a bishop in the execution of his duties should let a decision of Parliament be his highest authority when he has to make a decision regarding church matters, regardless of the fact that in his oath of office he has bound himself to regard Scripture and the Confession as his supreme authorities in such cases.

Is Parliament not content with being the Church's legislator in civil matters? Is it also to be the Church's supreme spiritual authority?

If it usurps this latter function it is moving towards the totalitarian state of which Hitler's Third Empire was an example. Would it not be well for Parliament and the Government to let Bishop Baun retain the liberty to decide for himself what Scripture and the Confession prescribe with regard to the discharge of his office, the liberty which was accorded to him when the episcopal office was bestowed on him?

For if liberty is denied Bishop Baun with regard to this point to-day, what will be the next question where a bishop is deprived of his liberty to be guided by Scripture and the Confession according to his conviction, merely because this happens to conflict with the attitude of a chance majority in Parliament?

The conflict in Skive opens wide perspectives.

Does the Danish Parliament understand the warning against setting foot on the road leading to the totalitarian state by undertaking legislation that anticipates the free decisions of the church, thus making the National Church subservient to the opinions of the majority?".

Protest to Spain Ends in Surprise.

Representatives of the Ecumenical Council in Denmark, The Church of Denmark Council on Inter-Church Relations, and the Danish Church's Relief Work Organization headed by Bishop H. Fuglsang-Damgaard had requested an audience on Friday, March 2nd, with the Spanish Ambassador in Denmark to protest against the closing of the Protestant theological seminary in Madrid. But before this the Ambassador stated that the seminary had been re-opened. However, he could give no information regarding the terms nor the particulars connected with the re-opening.

The Joint Ecumenical Council at once cabled the information to the World Council of Churches, and the planned notification was postponed until further information regarding the re-opening can be obtained.

The Danish paper, Kristeligt Dagblad, has denounced the closing of the Spanish theological seminary in a leading article.

FINLAND

Attacks Against the Church after Presidential Election.

As the readers are doubtless aware the former Finnish Prime Minister Dr. Urho Kekkonen was elected as the new president on February 15th with a very small majority, i.e.

151 of the 300 votes cast. His opponent, the Speaker of Parliament, Mr. K.A. Fagerholm, received 149 votes. Among those who voted for Mr. Fagerholm were not only members of his own party, the Social Democrats, but also most of the representatives of the Finnish conservative party and the Swedish people's party. This has caused indignation in Dr. Kekkonen's party, the Agrarians, where it is asked how religious people in the Finnish conservative party and the Swedish people's party could vote for Mr. Fagerholm, who in contrast to Dr. Kekkonen is not a member of the Church (however, he had promised to become a member of the National Church again in case he should be elected. See CN No. 12). Of the 57 electors belonging to the Finnish conservative party 11 were clergymen.

The attack is especially launched against the Finnish clergy, and the agrarian paper "Maakansa" criticizes the church paper "Kotimaa" accusing it of having worked for the election of Mr. Fagerholm. "Maakansa" also writes sarcastically of how prayers were said at a service held for the electors on the morning of the election in the Chapel of the National Museum, asking God "to grant the people a good and God-fearing president", whereupon many of the pro-church electors that evening voted for a man, who was not a member of the church. "Maakansa" demands that the church "should purge its own house" and set a different political course from the present one.

"Kotimaa" refutes these accusations, pointing out that it has had no intention of interfering in the parties' presidential campaign. For this reason it printed no articles for or against the presidential candidates in this period.

Russian Cemetery Found in Porkala.

In Djupström near Kyrkslätt in Porkala a Russian cemetery has been found where the Russian garrison during the occupation buried its dead. The cemetery is not far from Kyrkslätt cemetery, a fenced off area in a field. The graves are furnished with pictures of the deceased, and some have Orthodox crosses. Among them are the graves of a few children, one of a two-year old boy who was born and died in this occupied zone.

The Russian cemetery will be kept in order.

Clergyman on the Film "Unknown Soldier".

The film of the Finnish author Väinö Linna's war novel "Unknown Soldier" ("Tuntematon sotilas") has had as great a success as the book in Finland as well as in a number of other countries. The author, a worker in a factory in Tampere (Tammerfors), describes the fate of a Finnish machine-gun company during the last war in East Carelia so vividly that it grips both readers and movie-goers. "Unknown Soldier" has been called this war's "All Quiet on the Western Front".

A Finno-Swedish pastor in Borgå Rev. Sven Sorthan has described in Borgåbladet how deeply stirred he was by the film and how it made him wish to meet the characters again. He

found them refreshingly free from all sorts of social conventions. They do not care for parade and reject applause. In word and deed they seem to be negativists, at least to those who love fine phrases and gestures. Yet their solidarity shows how positive their attitude is at bottom. It is through this solidarity that they prove their humanity in the deepest and richest sense of this word.

The Master from Nazareth once said of the Pharisees (i.e. partisans, politicians, and phrase-makers): "They say, but do not .." Of the characters in Linna's book the same Master would say: "They say not, but they do".

To us men of peace, Pastor Sorthan concludes, the film "Unknown Soldier" is not just another film, but the film with a message that can never be forgotten.

ICELAND

Religious Drama to be Performed at Jubilee Celebration.

At the 900th anniversary of the establishment of the first diocese in Iceland to be celebrated on July 1st this year, a religious drama is to be performed based on a theme from that historic event. The first prize of 10,000 Icelandic crowns in a competition for such a drama has been awarded to Sira Sveinn Vikingur Grimsson, head of the Icelandic church office.

The stamps to be issued in connection with the jubilee (see CN No. 13) are estimated to raise 2 million Icelandic crowns for the rebuilding of the Cathedral in Skálholt, long since destroyed. The stamps are printed in London.

NORWAY

Metropolitan of Moscow on Private Visit to Norway.

The Metropolitan Nikolai of Moscow arrived in Oslo on February 27th for a 10 days' private visit at the invitation of Pastor Ragnar Forbech, who was awarded the Stalin Prize for peace work last year. During his visit the Metropolitan was not in official contact with any church authority. He spoke at several public meetings and in a students' association on the position of the Russian Orthodox Church to-day.

The Church Ministry's refusal to allow the Metropolitan to speak in Oslo Cathedral attracted a good deal of attention. Such permission must be granted by the Church Ministry in the case of speakers from non-Lutheran churches upon the recommendation of the parochial church council. The reasons for the refusal were stated to be that the visit had not been arranged through church channels and that it had been planned (by Forbech) in co-operation with a political organization,

the Communist Peace Movement. The University of Oslo refused to let the Metropolitan speak in the great hall, because the Metropolitan was to have spoken on a political subject "The Peace Movement To-day". However, the University later rented out another room for a meeting privately arranged by Pastor Forbech where the Metropolitan spoke on the Russian Church.

Most of the press and all the church leaders who were asked for their opinions agreed that it was right that the Cathedral was not used. At the same time it was deplored that the way the invitation was made prevented the church from establishing official contact with the Russian Church on this occasion.

At a press conference the Metropolitan strongly emphasized that the Russian Church is completely free and independent even though it is not allowed to interfere in internal politics. The priests, who are under arrest at the moment, and the Metropolitan does not deny that some have been arrested, have been imprisoned for political crimes, not because of their religious activities. This statement was opposed in an open letter in the organ of the Social Democrat Party and therefore of the present Government Arbeiderbladet, written by a former prisoner from the Soviet Union. Mr. Oswald Harjo was a Russian spy during the War, but was later arrested in the Soviet and only released last year after 13 years in Russian prison camps. The former Communist Mr. Harjo tells in his letter of how in one of the camps he saw a priest who was put in solitary confinement for singing hymns and died there.

Fewer Catholics in Norway?

Due to the increased Roman Catholic activity in late years, e.g. the establishment of two dioceses, the erection of new churches, and the increasing number of priests, it has generally been assumed that Catholicism was advancing, even rapidly advancing in Norway. An investigation carried out by Professor Johs. Hygen in Oslo and published in "Morgenbladet" proves that this is not the case.

The census of 1946 showed 4.905 Catholics in Norway, but the next census in 1950 only showed 4.753. Since then no census has been made, but the Professor has procured information from all the parishes in Oslo regarding the number of converts to the Catholic Church in this period. This figure only amounts to a total of 100. This is the more remarkable, seeing that there has been a noticeable increase in population during the last 10 years in Norway, and furthermore the Catholics, who have 1 priest for every 200 parishioners, should have a better opportunity of establishing personal relationships than the National Church which has 3.500 parishioners to every pastor.

The Church paper "Vårt Land" writes in a leading article that the failure of the Catholics is not only due to secularization, but also to the fact that Evangelical views must be considerably better founded in the people than is generally assumed.

Christian Ethics in the Norwegian Radio.

A series of programmes is at present being broadcast in the Norwegian radio under the title "How Ought We To Live?". The series which is based on Pastor Sigurd Opdahl's well-known book on Christian Ethics is to deal with the pressing problems of daily life from a Christian point of view. It will include a discussion of the right ttitudes and modes of action in the life of the individual, the home, office, factory, and community. The programmes will be conducted by Pastor Arne Fjellberg.

Large Youth Protest Against Pornographic Magazines.

No less than 25 youth organizations and youth groups in Bergen have sent a strong resolution to the Norwegian Parliament against the many papers and magazines that "have a subversive influence both morally and socially because of their criminal, sadistic, and sexual content. They cheapen and muddle the views of people, especially young people, on some of life's greatest values, e.g. the relationship between man and woman".

The initiative behind this action was taken by a small group of high-school students, who took up the matter a short while ago, and most of the 25 organizations that have signed the resolution are Christian. The resolution is also supported by the diocesan council, the town's parochial church council, the pastors' association, and a number of other organizations.

The resolution requests the responsible authorities to prescribe more rigourous penalties for the abuse of the freedom of the press, and at the same time it calls upon magazine dealers not to sell a number of specified papers.

The Christian daily in Bergen "Dagen" writes that it would appear that the resolution had gathered a larger and more representative selection of signatures than any other similar appeal. The paper claims that this gives the action a weight and a breadth which reflects the attitude in wide circles and gives no room for doubt as to public opinion.

Norway's Church Must Expect Permanent Unpopularity.

The former primate of the Norwegian Church Bishop Eivind Berggrav has dealt with the question of the church's position in the welfare state in an article in his journal "Kirke og Kultur". He writes:

The devaluation of the church, which began soon after the liberation, continues. Now the Odelsting has removed the pastor from the board of supervision in charge of the parsonage, with which he alone is familiar from having to live in it every day. The new rule has no practical significance (rather it is unpractical), but it is an expression of the petty spite against the pastors, "although there are worthy men among them", as one of the pictors expressed himself in the debate on this question.

A thought forces itself upon me: The last 10 years have sought to teach the church that it must expect permanent unpopularity as the normal state of affairs in Norway. We can change so quickly from a mild rain to icy cold. We were poor prophets and shortsighted leaders. Now we have learned where we really stand. But it gives a brighter outlook suddenly to be torn out of a delusion.

6 New Homes for Soldiers to be Built in Norway.

The Christian work among soldiers has been rapidly developing in Norway in late years. Not only are there now 21 army chaplains in the Norwegian armed forces, but various voluntary church organizations are working towards the erection of a number of homes for soldiers outside garrison precincts all over the country. So far only 2 of these are actually under construction, but there are plans for 6 others, and several of these are expected to get under way in the near future. It is especially Norway's Christian Youth League (Norges kristelige Ungdomsforbund) and The Norwegian Lutheran Home Mission League (Det norske lutherske Indremisjonsforbund) that have been working for the soldiers, but The Western Home Mission League (Vestlandets Indremissionsforbund) is working in its own district, and Norway's Mission to the Finns (Norges Finnemissionsselskab) is making a special effort to take care of the Finnish recruits. The two first organizations, which work in close co-operation, have their own army chaplains, and these work together with the regular army chaplains.

Norway's Free Churches Do not Want Undenominational Religious Education.

At a meeting in Oslo Norway's Dissenter Council, which represents the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Mission Covenant, the Pentecostal Movement, the Quakers, and several other small free churches, has unanimously declared against a new bill advocating undenominational religious education in the schools.

Until now religious education in the Norwegian schools has been given in accordance with the Act on Religion which decreed that such education must be in agreement with the doctrine of the National Church, i.e. Evangelical-Lutheran, and that only members of the National Church could give religious instruction. A private Bill has however been introduced in Parliament by member of the Lagting, Mr. Carl Bonnevie, proposing that religious instruction be undenominational - though giving "a sure knowledge of the main facts of Jesus' life and teaching and of the history of Christianity" and considering this its main objective.

If this Bill is passed members of the Free Churches would be allowed to teach religion in the schools, but at the meeting of the Dissenter Council it was the decided opinion that the Bill showed unrealistic tendencies, which the Free Churches did not feel they could support. For this reason the Council unanimously rejected the Bill, which had been sent by the Ministry of Justice with a request for the Council's opinion.

Instead, it is pointed out that the Dissenter Council has already asked the Ministry for a revision of i.a. the Dissenter Act, by means of which Norwegian legislation can be brought into conformity with the section regarding religious freedom in the Declaration of Human Rights. The Dissenter Council has advocated that dispensation be given to members of the various denominations represented in the Dissenter Council, allowing them to give religious instruction in the schools and that the instruction be given in conformity with the school's text books.

The Dissenter Council's attitude towards Bonnevie's Bill has been joyfully received by the Christian dailies in Oslo and Bergen, which claim that the unanimous "No" shows vision and the will as well as the ability to be guided by objective principles. "Dagen" in Bergen believes that this answer must make it easier for the Free Churches and the National Church to negotiate, and "Vårt Land" in Oslo writes that it obligates the Church to show understanding and vision regarding the Free Churches' wishes as to the Dissenter Act.

In connection with the meeting of the Dissenter Council a meeting of the joint council of Evangelical Churches with 10 representatives from each of the affiliated denominations, and it was resolved to hold a similar meeting of leaders once a year so as to broaden the contact between the Free Churches.

SWEDEN

"Elect More Christians to Parliament!"

The Christian action committee which was formed some time ago in Sweden with members from the Free Churches as well as from the National Church with the purpose of urging Christian views in politics (see CN No. 13) has now sent out an appeal in connection with the parliamentary elections next autumn. The appeal is signed by a large number of representatives from Christian and idealistic organizations and calls upon all people who are alive to their moral responsibilities from whatever class of society and party to strengthen Christian influence in Parliament and vote for Christian candidates at the coming nominations of candidates and at the elections next autumn.

The appeal speaks of the levelling of social differences and the effort to improve the material standard of living as work that must be continued. It goes on to point out a number of drawbacks in the situation which wide circles of the population are noting with increasing uneasiness: "The dissolving of moral standards and irresponsibility are cutting deep wounds in the life of society. The sacredness of marriage is being written off, the value of unborn life is being depreciated, the attitude that might is right is spreading. Children and young people have their minds poisened by brutalizing serials and pornography. Drinking and alcoholism

are gaining ground. Robbery, sexual crimes, and other violent crimes are becoming more and more common ..."

The appeal claims that this development is due to the weakening of moral ideas due to the fact that Christianity has been pushed aside in education as well as in society in general. On this background the appeal calls for an effort to elect yet more suitable representatives with a clear Christian view of life into Parliament. There is no wish of establishing a special Christian party, but the appeal calls for more Christian representatives within the already existing parties.

Conference on Theology and Work.

The Sigtuna Foundation and the Swedish Church's Welfare Organization have together sent out invitations for a conference in Sigtuna from 7th- 9th April on "Theology and Work". The question to be discussed is the Christian view of work in modern society, and among the speakers will be Secretary in the Labour Movement Mr. Bo Carlsson and Professor Gustaf Wingren. The Finnish exegete Professor Rafael Gyllenberg and Professor of the philosophy of religion Harald Eklund will speak on the Bible's attitude towards work.

Investigation of Separation between Church and State Proposed.

The newly appointed Swedish ambassador in Oslo Mr. Rolf Edberg, who is a Social Democratic member of Parliament, has proposed in Parliament that "a comprehensive investigation as to the forms of and the foreseeable results of a dissolution of the organizational connection between State and Church" be made.

The proposal clearly aims at a future separation of the State and the Lutheran National Church in view of the fact that present conditions are in conflict with the principle of religious freedom, and that the unified Church connected with the State is no longer justifiable because of the growth of the Free Churches and the progress of secularization.

In principle the Free Church daily "Svenska Morgonbladet" advocates a thorough investigation, though it feels that such an investigation should be unbiassed and not aimed direct at a future separation of Church and State.

Towards Unity of the Free Churches?

In a series of articles in the Free Church daily "Svenska Morgonbladet" the secretary of the Joint Committee of the Free Churches in Sweden, the Baptist pastor Rev. Bo Swedberg has drawn up some guiding principles for co-operation between the Free Churches which are undoubtedly characteristic of the views of the young generation of Free Churchmen. Pastor Swedberg names several forms of Free Church activity on a common front, i.e. the Free Church Pastoral Institute, the study league, Free Church efforts in Parliament, work with films, radio, and television. But he feels that this kind of joint action lacks the support of a united Free Church opinion, and here a "Free Church brain trust" is needed to follow and comment on the general political, cultural, and

social debate. Furthermore, it is of the greatest importance for the creation of a public opinion that there should be a common rallying-place for the Free Churches similar to that possessed by the National Church in the Sigtuna Foundation.

As an important step towards Free Church unity Pastor Swedberg advocates the establishment of local Free Church councils that can work towards the solution of the many common local problems. As one of the tasks these local councils might solve he mentions a distribution of new suburbs between the Free Churches so that they do not all build churches or other church work centres in the same place, while other areas are neglected.

Pastor Swedberg's articles are being studied with great interest in Swedish Free Church circles.

The Salvation Army and the Methodists Build Together.

It is not easy to obtain a building permit for churches in Sweden at present because of the existing housing shortage, but if the churches are built in connection with houses, it becomes much easier. This is the reason why the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army in Västerås are at present working together to complete an extensive building programme costing some 6 million Swedish crowns, a 7-storey apartment house with 36 apartments and several single rooms as well as a 2-storey basement for garages and store rooms forms the centre of the group of buildings, and around this there are to be shops in one storey with the Methodist church and the Salvation Army hall built somewhat higher, each with room for some 300 people. Meeting rooms for young people belonging to the two church organizations will also be fitted up in the new buildings.

Unrest in Dr. Hedegård's Organization.

The well-known Swedish vice-chairman of the International Council of Christian Churches (the conservative counterpart to the World Council of Churches" has caused serious unrest in his Swedish organization "För Biblisk Tro" (For Biblical Faith). No less than 10 of the 18 members of the board, including the chairman, the vice-chairman, and the secretary, have resigned their offices. This has been done in protest against the arbitrary way in which Dr. Hedegård has edited the organization's magazine. Neither did they approve of the aggressiveness that characterized Dr. Hedegård's attacks on authorities and individuals, nor of the fact that a large proportion of the space in the journal was filled with "almost propaganda-like information about ICCC".

The reason why Dr. Hedegård was not simply removed by a majority vote, and why so many preferred to resign their offices, is given in a statement issued by 8 of those who have resigned. They say that they have acted in this way because to them Dr. Hedegård "as the defender of the faith appears to be and is respected as one of God's great instruments".

New Form of Contact with the "Radio Church".

Through a number of investigations in Sweden as well as in other countries it has been established that church broadcasts on the radio are followed by many who have no other contact with any church. And it has been discussed how such contact may be established.

In these weeks the daily morning prayer services have a special Lenten character, and the Free Church daily "Svenska Morgonbladet" is seeking in connection with these services to establish contact with listeners who desire an answer to personal questions, help, and intercessory prayers. A special correspondence column has been started in the paper to answer questions, and the men from the Free Churches and the National Church who conduct the services have expressed their willingness to establish personal contact with listeners who desire it.

Bishop Cullberg Becomes Doctor Honoris Causa in Greifswald.

Bishop J.O. Cullberg, D.D. and D.Ph., of Västerås, the chairman of Svenska Kyrkohjälpen (the Swedish Church Organization for Inter-Church Aid) recently gave a serie of lectures at Greifswald (in East Germany) and received an honorary doctor's degree in theology.

The doctorate was conferred in the presence of the Rector of the University, Bishop Dr. Krummacher and numerous professors, lecturers, and students.

Bishop Cullberg has visited East Germany several times since the War, and as chairman of Svenska Kyrkohjälpen he has contributed to the rebuilding of churches in the devastated Oder- and Randow-districts. Svenska Kyrkohjälpen is largely responsible for the establishment of the church welfare institute in Züssow, and one of its buildings bears the name of Bishop Cullberg.

Morning Prayers in Insurance Company.

Since three months every Wednesday morning 20 minutes before the beginning of the office hours there is a morning service in the conference room of the Insurance Company Fylgia in Stockholm. The initiative has been taken by the employed themselves, and 30 - 40 persons attend these meetings. A pastor of the Lutheran National Church, rev. David Svenungsson, is leading the services. The company has bought the hymnbooks needed.

Swedish Ecumenical Conference.

Since 1932 ecumenical conferences are regularly arranged in Sigtuna where the relations between the Lutheran National Church and the Free Churches are discussed. After the Northern Ecumenical Institute was founded in 1940 it has arranged these conferences. The next conference of this kind will be held from April 5th-6th. The Bishop of Västerås, Dr. John Cullberg, and Pastor Simon Öberg will introduce

the discussion on the subject "Tensions and Difficulties in Our Christian Cooperation. How Could We Master Them?". The discussion on the subject "Evangelism - an Ecumenical Task" will be opened by the Bishop of Skara Sven Danell and Pastor Herbert Axelsson. The Bishop emeritus of Stockholm Dr. Manfred Björkquist will speak on "The Gospel and the People of Our Time".